

## SPIRITUALIZING INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: IN VIEW OF VEDANTA

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### ABSTRACT

*Spirituality, because of its reach into the deeper depths of emotions, has intense impact on one's aspirations and thought process. Spiritual attitude trains us to live harmoniously with our environment and to meet the challenges of life, at personal, familial, professional and social levels. It thus elevates clarity and focus of mind and sharpens its incisive intellectual potentials. Harmony and peace, both collective and individual, depend on rock-solid, healthy and strong relationships. The wisdom of Vedanta offers useful insights into the subject of Inter-Personal Relationships and has made a significant contribution in this field. Swollen egotism and its asuric cohorts, afflicted with secular 'money-ism', breeds selfishness a-dvaita. Workplace ill-health is then inevitable. So, one should try to control the shrinking egotism by developing the daivik (noble) companions and moving towards the divinity of man, which alone can resolve the conflict.*

**KEYWORDS:** Lower Self, Higher Self, Avidya, Individualism & Spiritual Practices

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### INTRODUCTION

Spirituality enlightens thinking, emotions, and basic tendencies. It is the science of decisive growth in psychological, sociological, and moral values. It develops one to be sensitive towards fellow beings and the Mother Nature. It gives a meaningful directive to the scientific and materialistic progress to not to focus only on an increase of comforts and worldly gains but to a holistic growth for the whole of humanity without any ill effects in times to come. Spirituality elevates every aspect of living towards happiness and illuminates the future.

Bonding among people is known as interpersonal relationship. Attraction between two persons makes them closer and finally the bonding converts into a strong interpersonal relationship. Interpersonal relationship can be developed among people working together in the organizations, among family members and relatives, among friends etc.

Swami Vivekananda says, "... Humans become devil by gaining more and more knowledge and power without sanctity" (Vivekananda 1962). More than hundred years later our workplaces richly deserve this scathing rebuke to a much greater degree than before. The solution lies in holiness by confronting the 'unripe ego' as practical Vedanta lays down (Chakravarti 2014). He also added: "Learn obedience first. --- We are all of us self-important, which never produces any work. --- perfect obedience is altogether lacking in us" and "jealousy is the bane of our national character, natural to slaves" (Vivekananda 1962).

Disobedience and jealousy have marred the worker, the workplace and work alike. They both spring again from the 'lower self' or the 'unripe ego'. The secular approach to individualism cannot combat this scourge, at least not in India. It is the education about the sacred which has to assume central importance. Limitation of

*para vidya* (higher knowledge) ought to precede entry into *apara vidya* (lower knowledge). We have stinking workplaces because the imparting even a modicum of *para vidya* has vanished altogether. The joint blight of both capitalist and communist ideologies has done irreparable damage (Chakravarti 2014).

Attitude of non-admitting mistakes and volunteering to undergo the relevant punishment is one of the biggest deficits in workplaces today. We do not accept our errors or lapses. Intellect is used in all possible ways to rationalize irresponsibility. The sense of remorse, regret, repentance, shame for wrongdoings is virtually gone. Even, the simple courtesy of saying 'I am sorry' is now a rarity. Why? It is because the 'Lower Self' which presides and rules over workplaces. The *Vedantic* response is obvious again – attaining the 'Higher Self' (Chakravarti 2014).

### **Philosophy of Vedanta**

Vedanta asserts that this seeming world of sense object is not real. This is only a finite appearance. It can be ended. The world is seemingly real to one just as the snake is real to the deluded, although there is really only a rope. Mirage can never be; even when one 'sees' the mirage, desert alone is the reality in it! The Upanishads proclaim the phenomenality of the world.

It is a common belief that the distinction between Reality and Appearance (or Illusion) is of importance only to the student of philosophy. As a matter of fact, however, there is no branch of human activity in which one could make any progress without making use of this distinction. It is clear on a little reflection that in the various sciences, our sole aim is to get the real facts of the situation and learn to avoid illusions. And even in practical activities such as business or politics which seem at first sight to have nothing to do with this distinction, it is discovered that in the long run success goes to him who has a hold on the real facts of the situation and who does not allow himself to be misled by appearances. It is true that nowhere outside philosophy does one find a conscious and systematic effort to understand the distinction.

Indian philosophy says that life is not a meaningless madness, in which we are all to sing a song of sorrow and slipping through stupidities, but it has the highest potentialities for perfection. In the finest equipment of man, we find the largest amount of "awareness" or "consciousness" expressed not only illuminating clearly and vividly the world without but with equal clarity the world within also. If we work hard with right actions, work with concentration and determination, we can win over the world and achieve our eternal Timeless state (Gaur 2011).

### **Human Values of Vedanta**

Compassion, love and emotions that are empathetic in nature form the crux of Vedanta. For the treatment of Ethics, Samkara holds extra-ordinary views about 'morality'. It is sometimes charged (though wrongly) that *Advaitism* is antagonistic to Ethics. For, in the view of Samkara, actions may be right or wrong — that is, — correct or incorrect, but not good or bad, moral or immoral. The true contention is, however, this that whatever is correct — must be moral (though not conversely always) — and whatever is incorrect — must be immoral as resulting from ignorance. Thus Samkara lays down a very rigid code of morality that has a self-transcending goal.

In Indian philosophy, the chief end of man is the enlightenment of the individual. The vital ideas of the conception of life consider it as a journey to reach its highest goal of spirituality. The Upanishad tells us that there is nothing higher than the person. But man is not an assemblage of body, life, and mind born of and subject to physical nature. The natural half animal being with which he confuses himself is not his whole or real being. It is but an instrument for the use of spirit that is the truth of his being. To find the real self, to exceed his apparent, outward self is the greatness of which man alone

of all beings is capable. *Moksa* is the spiritual freedom. To be shut up in one's own ego, to rest in the apparent self and mistake it for the real, is the root of all unrest to which man is exposed by reason of his mentality. To aspire to universality (*sarvatmabhava*) through his mind and reason, through his heart and love, through his will and power is the high sense of his humanity (Gaur 2011).

### Central Concepts of Vedanta

The central concepts of *Advaita Vedanta* are *Brahman*, *atman*, ignorance (*avidya*), *maya*, *karma*, *moksa*, and knowledge. (1) *Brhaman* is the unchanging reality underlying the variety and multiplicity of phenomena. *Brahman* is eternal, unborn, uncreated, and immutable. (2) *Atman* is the inmost Self of man. It is eternal, unborn, uncreated, and immutable. It is not to be confused with the empirical ego, whose distinguishing feature is constant change. Further, and most importantly, *Brahman* and *atman* are identical; that is they are two different labels for one and the same ultimate reality. *Brahman* is beyond names and forms. *Brahman* is not to be thought of as creator or God. *Brahman* is neither a he nor a she but is the It. (3) Ignorance (*avidya*) consists in our thinking on the one hand that the empirical ego is an ultimate reality, and on the other that our knowledge of the world obtained through senses and reason is the knowledge of ultimate reality. Ignorance, although beginning less (*anadi*), can be put an end to. The end of ignorance is the realization of the identity of *atman* and *Brahman* and therewith of the non-ultimacy of individuality characteristic of phenomena, including the empirical ego. (4) *Maya* is the power of *Brahman* by which it manifests itself as the phenomenal world. It is beginning less and endless, being coexistent with *Brahman* itself. It would be a serious mistake to construe this statement as implying that there are two ultimate realities, namely, *Brahman* and *maya*, for *maya* has non existence apart from *Brahman*. Very often the phenomenal world is referred to as *maya* and *maya* is translated and interpreted as illusion and unreality, thereby presenting the *Advaita Vedantin* as claiming that the phenomenal world is illusory and unreal. Such an interpretation of the *Advaita Vedantin's* conception of *maya* is unwarranted, for the *Advaita Vedantin* does not deny the phenomenal world or its reality. What he does deny is its ultimacy. Correctly speaking, then, for the *Advaita Vedantin* reality is that which exists without depending for its existence on anything other than itself. In this sense, only *Brahman* is the reality, while the phenomenal world, being dependent on *Brahman*, is not ultimate. The *Advaita Vedantin* describes such non-ultimate existence as "neither real nor unreal nor both", meaning thereby that it is neither ultimately real nor wholly unreal, illusory, and non-existent. Here the celebrated rope-snake illustration of the *Advaita Vedantin* can be kept in mind, as well as his observation that there can be no such thing as a pure illusion – every illusion is grounded in reality. (5) *Karma* is the state of bondage arising out of man's ignorance and is generated by man's own thoughts, world, and deeds; and through rebirth *karma* acquires a peculiar psycho-moral continuity. *Karma* (i.e., bondage) can be exhausted and brought to an end by attaining the knowledge of ultimate reality through the realization of the identity of *atman* and *Brahman*. (6) *Moksa* (also known as *kaivalya*) is freedom from *karma* and bondage (which in turn is freedom from ignorance) and is to be attained through the knowledge of ultimate reality. *Moksa* is not something looked forward to after death but is to be attained here and now. He who attains it is known as *jivanmukta*, one who is absolutely free even while existing as part of the phenomenal world. (7) Knowledge and truth are of two kinds: the lower and phenomenal (*vyavahara*) and the higher and supra phenomenal (*paramartha*). The first kind of knowledge and truth is the product of senses and intellect; name and form are the warp and woof of such knowledge and truth. Consequently, opposition, relativity, limited validity, and sublatability are of the essence of the lower knowledge and truth. On the other hand, the higher knowledge and truth are absolute and unsublatable. They are not the product of senses and intellect but of primordial intuitive insight into the nature of existence. Unity, non-relativity, absolute certainty, and unsublatability are their distinguishing features. Such knowledge

and truth surpass all distinctions and oppositions. More importantly, unlike the lower knowledge and truth, the higher knowledge and truth are soteriological, in that they bring about a total transformation of him who attains them. In a word, they bring one wisdom, peace, and freedom” (Gaur 2011).

### Samkara’s Theory of Causation

For the theory of causation, Samkara’s *vivartavada* rests on his fundamental claim that forms do not and cannot have any reality of their own; their reality is inseparable from and dependent upon substance. According to Samkara, forms cannot be conceived to exist apart from substance. As such, to regard changes in form as real is to regard substance as undergoing real changes. But substance is that which remains the same through all forms and changes in forms; the gold in the ring and the gold in the necklace are one and the same substance. Samkara therefore concludes that all changes in the form are only apparent changes. In brief, changes in form are not changes in reality but only in appearance. This argument for the apparent nature of changes in form can easily be extended to qualities also.

Concept of *maya*, *avidya*, and *adhyas* conjoined with criterion of sublation and *vivartavada* lead to Samkara’s metaphysics, according to which *Brahman* is the sole reality and the world of our senses and intellect is merely an appearance. It is to be emphasized that when Samkara talks about the phenomenon world as *maya* in the sense of illusion, he is not saying that the phenomenon world is unreality, but that it is an appearance, which has its foundation in reality. Appearance, unlike unreality, is sublatale. We experience illusions which get sublated through our growth in time. It is clear that when Samkara says that the phenomenon world is an illusion, he is not saying that it is non-existent and unreal (Gaur 2011).

### Present Workplace Culture

Disobedience and jealousy have marred the worker, the workplace and work alike. They both spring again from the ‘lower self’ or the ‘unripe ego’. The secular approach to individualism cannot combat this scourge, at least not in India. It is the education about the sacred which has to assume central importance. Limitation of *para vidya* (higher knowledge) ought to precede entry into *apara vidya* (lower knowledge). We have stinking workplaces because the imparting even a modicum of *para vidya* has vanished altogether. The joint blight of both capitalist and communist ideologies has done irreparable damage (Chakravarti 2014).

### Avidya

The term *avidya* means ignorance, which may be characterized as not knowing the real and also thinking that appearances are real. From a logical point of view *maya* and ignorance are coeval, in that there cannot be one without the other. However, from an epistemological point of view, ignorance may be regarded prior to *maya*, in that the latter presupposes the former. That is, ignorance is the necessary condition for *maya*. This also means that *maya* vanishes as soon as ignorance is overcome by the knowledge of the real. The magician’s trick best illustrates this point. Suppose a magician makes one thing appear as another or apparently produces something out of nothing. Samkara’s point here is that it is one, being ignorant of the magician’s trick, who mistakes appearance for reality. For the magician himself, as the master of the trick, there can be no illusion. But once one discovers the trick by which the magician makes things appear, disappear, and reappear, one no longer falls victim to illusion but recognizes the magician’s performance for what it is. Just as the magician by his power of manipulation creates in us illusions, so also reality (*Brahman*) by its creative power, namely, *maya*, produces in us illusion of the phenomenon world of variety, multiplicity, and diversity. Once ignorance is overcome by

knowledge of the real, one is no longer held captive by *maya*.

The literal meaning of *adhyasa* is ‘superimposition’, which Samkara defines as “the apparent presentation in the form of remembrance, to consciousness of something previously observed in some other thing”. As an act, superimposition is our thinking mistakenly that an object has certain attributes which in fact it does not have. The classic illustration of superimposition is the rope-snake example. A man steps on a rope in the dark and thinks it is a snake. Here the rope is what is immediately present to consciousness, the snake is an object of past experience, and superimposition is the person’s mistakenly attributing the remembered qualities of the snake to the rope. The present experience of the rope and the past experience of a snake are necessary conditions for one to be able mistakenly claim that what is now experienced as a snake. In other words, the snakelike experience cannot be had in the absence of the rope. But when one brings a lamp and discovers that what one has stepped on is only a rope, one’s snakelike experience is recognized as being illusory. In a similar manner, the empirical world arises as a result of superimposing qualities on the undifferentiated, unsublatable reality. “Just as under superimposition the rope is experienced as a snake, so also under the superimposition of names and forms reality, which is beyond names and forms, is experienced as the world of appearance. On attaining knowledge of reality, ignorance, *maya*, and the world of appearance vanish away simultaneously”.

The world of phenomena is the realm of *maya*, the product of ignorance, which in turn is generated by our superimposing names and forms on the unitary unsublatable, nameless, formless reality (*Brahman*). The empirical world thus is the world of appearances. This is not to say, however, that the world of appearance is unreal. On the contrary, since the world of appearances is sublatable by reality, namely, *Brahman*, it is not non-being and unreality. “Just as a man stepping on a rope in the dark thinks in his ignorance that it is a snake that he has stepped on, so also man in his ignorance of *Brahman*, the unchanging reality, thinks that the changing world of appearances is the reality. What then, one might ask, is the ontological status of the snake the man thinks he has stepped on? Or, on a cosmic scale, what is the ontological status of the world of appearances? According to Samkara, the snake is neither real nor unreal. It is not real, because it can be sublated, it is not unreal, because if it were it neither could nor could not be sublated. Similarly, the world of appearances is neither real nor unreal. Hence Samkara’s ontological hierarchy; the unreal, the neither real nor unreal, and the real. Further, just as no snakelike experience is possible without the empirical reality of the rope, so also there can be no experience of the world of appearances without the underlying reality of *Brahman*. Most importantly, just as there are no two numerically distinct realities called ‘the rope’ and ‘the snake’ but only one reality, the rope appearing as snake under certain conditions of superimposition, so also there are no two numerically distinct realities called ‘the empirical world’ and ‘*Brahman*,’ but only one reality, *Brahman*, which appears to us as the empirical world under the superimposition of names and forms. When men free themselves from ignorance and *maya*, the world of appearances itself will be seen as *Brahman*. This is exactly the Upanishadic teaching that *Brahman* is the sole reality underlying the world of appearances” (Gaur 2011).

### Lower and Higher Knowledge

Consistent with the Upanishads, Samkara distinguishes two kinds of knowledge and truth: the lower, conventional, practical, relative knowledge and truth (*vyavaharika-satya*) and the higher, absolute knowledge and truth (*paramarthika-satya*). The lower knowledge is the product of the senses and intellect, — that is, knowledge obtained through superimposition. Consequently, it is of the changing, finite, objective world of the empirical experience. On the other hand, the higher knowledge is non-perceptual, non-conceptual, and hence non-propositional. It is the knowledge of

the real, of *Brahman* (*atman*).

Samkara maintains that the lower knowledge is valid and pragmatically efficacious in the realm of phenomena, the world of appearances. Samkara emphasizes that to say that a given truth is a lower truth is not to say that it is falsehood, but only that it is a truth conditioned by other truths and hence cannot be claimed to be absolute truth. Samkara readily grants that lower truths are useful in dealing with the objective world of appearances. Common sense, logic, science, and philosophy are all to be pursued for their fruitfulness for understanding particular domains of the empirical world. Further, to say that the world of appearances is an illusion is not to say it is nothing and non-existent. More importantly, he who has not experienced reality has no business declaring that the phenomenal world is an illusion or a mere appearance. “The phenomenal world is an illusion and appearance only in the light of the experience of reality. Just as the unreality of the imaginary standpoint (*pratibhasika satta*) can only be certified by attaining the empirical standpoint (*vyavaharika satta*), so also the neither-real-nor-unreal status of the empirical standpoint can only be realized by attaining the absolute standpoint (*paramarthika satta*). It is to be emphasized that even on attaining the absolute standpoint; the empirical world does not become unreality, but is only realized to be an illusion, which, we may recall, is not non-being. Thus Samkara teaches neither the unreality of the empirical world nor the falsity of empirical truths”.

True to the spirit of the Indian tradition, Samkara holds that man’s state of bondage and suffering is due not to any original sin on his part but to original ignorance (*avidya*). It is by conquering this ignorance by the knowledge of reality — the identity of *atman* and *Brahman* — that man attains *moksa*, the state of absolute freedom from ignorance, *Maya*, bondage, and suffering. For this reason, knowledge of reality is called liberating knowledge. It is also called soteriological knowledge in that it radically transforms man. The man who has attained *moksa* is freed once and for all from ignorance, illusion, delusion, fear, and attachment. By overcoming ignorance, by the knowledge of the real, he has brought the karmic chain to an end and thereby has broken out of the circle of births and deaths. He has thus gone beyond birth and death and attained immortality. “According to *Advaita Vedanta*, *moksa* is attained through *jnana-yoga*, which may be characterized as intellectual-spiritual discipline (or simply the path of knowledge). *Advaita Vedanta* recommends the fourfold discipline (*sadhana-catustaya*) as a practical aid to the aspirant to *moksa*. The discipline consists of *samanyasa*, *sravana*, *manana*, and *dhyana*”.

The knowledge of our Real Nature, the realization of the *Sivo’ham* state, the recognition that ‘I am the eternal,’ the knowledge that ‘I am not this – name-and-form personality but one homogeneous mass of Pure Consciousness,’ alone can end our ignorance (*Avidya*), the delusion (*Bhranti*), the source of all the desire eruptions (Chinmayananda 2006).

Every Indian school of philosophy holds, in its own way, that there is a direct realization of Truth. A man of realization enjoys total liberation from the strains, stresses and limitation of the terrestrial realm; one who fails to attain realization is entangled in them and is lost. The greater the understanding of the world of objects, the better shall be the relationship with it. With that right understanding if one approaches the world, it shall certainly yield a fuller satisfaction and with lesser chances of disillusionment and despair. The thesis that *Vedanta* propounds is that in hasty, unintelligent evaluation of life, of things and beings, one tends to make a wrong estimate of the world; by superimposing false values of things, and to suffer the consequent imperfections in experience. This pale vision of a misinterpreted world, which naturally doles out to ample share of sorrows is fully condemned by the wise seers in the Upanishads. They make a passionate appeal to man to make a right re-estimate of the world of objects (Gaur 2011):

We belong to Truth and through Truth we claim our relationship with others – husband, wife, and child and so on. They are not the sources of sorrow. Our failure to discover the true sense of belonging is the only sorrow. So our extrovert tendency, our *bahirmukhta* makes life a burden. An internal sense gives us a sense of belonging to Amrita, the imperishable. (Ishwarananda 1983)

### Multiple Problems and Single Solution

We may consider any problem relating to any sphere of life, and we will find that in the ultimate analysis it is the degradation of our moral standards that account for it. Any lasting solution to human problems can only be found by improvement in our moral conduct. Where the roots are strong, the branches and leaves are always healthy and fully grown. The problems in our society are innumerable. Caste-ism, fatalism, division, conflict, poverty, disease, illiteracy, filth, corruption, crime, laziness, deceit, dishonesty, insecurity, class conflicts, inequality, backwardness, dowry, crime against women and weaker sections of society, drug addiction, child marriage, are some of the problems infesting our social structure. Many Govt. agencies and NGOs are involved in eradication of such evils. Their efforts have a place in our life but then it has to be recognized that the ultimate solution lies in improving our standards of morality and social conduct. All social evils are manifestations of the devil in man. Once these evil tendencies get sublimated, it would be much easier to eradicate these and other evils from human society. As long as this sublimation does not take place and men continue to act under the influence of devilish tendencies leading to immoral conduct, the evil will continue in one form or the other.

If there are toxins in the body, they will keep on oozing out in one form or the other. If their exit from one source is checked, they will burst out in some other form. If the formations of these toxins are controlled, the body will become free from many diseases. The same is true about social evils. If immoral conduct can be checked (and this is possible only through improvement in thought process and moral standards) the source of social evils will dry up in course of time. It is a misconception to believe that once there is enough wealth, everyone would be happy. If money power is concentrated in people with low moral standards, it can play havoc to the peace and prosperity of the society. Money promotes happiness only when it is at the command of people with noble thoughts and concern for humanity.

Spiritual progress and self-realization are achieved only by such people as can subordinate their base instincts to higher emotions. If self-discipline is ignored and no efforts made to counteract the influence of base instincts, the higher ideals of human life can never be achieved. The mode of acquisition of resources has to be guided by the desire for social good and keeping high moral standards. What happens in the world outside us is determined by how we think within. If our thoughts are pure and noble, the external life around is bound to be happy and prosperous for all mankind. We have to wage a constant war against the evil in us and then alone is any spiritual progress possible.

If there is evil all around, it is futile to hope that any individual will remain unaffected by it. Where the entire atmosphere is vitiated, everyone is bound to suffer. Even if we confine our concern for individual security and happiness, it becomes essential that we do something towards control and eradication of social evils. Even if we forget about building a new world order, for survival in the existing system, we have to do something to ensure that we remain unaffected by the social evils. Since we cannot possibly insulate ourselves against all that is happening in the society of which we are a part, the only way out is to contribute our might towards control of social evils surrounding us. If there is immorality in our locality, our children are bound to be affected by it sooner or later. If other children in the school use abusive language, our own children will also pick up the same. If there are an increasing number of thieves in the society, some day we are bound

to be their victims. Whatever is present in the environment around us, will affect us and our family. It is true about weather and also about moral standards. The need, therefore, is that our front against evil practices should not be self-centered. The approach is partly philanthropic aimed at social good and world peace. But more than that the realization that even our personal interest are safe only in a society where the rule of law prevails and where human values are given an upper hand compared to self-interest leading to various social evils.

Moral regeneration is the most neglected aspects of our lives these days. Idealism is for practicing. Only if we keep this maxim in focus, we would be successful in creating a just social order. Let us have ideals and stick to these even if we suffer immense personal hardships. Ideals provide us the strength, necessary to stand up to temptations to evils. Patiently and dutifully we need to turn back to our heritage and lead lives guided by high ideals of human conduct (Sharma 2013).

### **Spiritual Practices for Improving Inter Personal Relationships**

Spiritual disciplines and practices are universal modes for preventive care and healthy development (growth) of mind-body system. Spirituality is the essence of all religious teachings. It should not be confused with observance of rituals, communal customs, ceremonial sacraments and doctrines. Self-study and improvement of thinking and actions in the light of illumined teaching of elevated souls is an integral component of spiritual practices. Reading of religious scriptures and attending discourses/discussions on these are also often prescribed for self study. But it should be remembered that what is referred in this context is only the text which deals with pure knowledge, which inspires human mind and heart towards divinity.

Self-restraint, which is an essential discipline and foundational component of spiritual practices, prevents downward flow of the currents of prana (life force) and gradually enhances vital energy, inner strength and will-power. A spiritually fit person is therefore not only free from stresses, depressions and all emotional and mental complications and protected from dissipation of his vital energy and hence from all infirmities, but he also becomes physically and mentally stronger, alert and dynamic.

Yoga exercises (*asanas* and *pranayamas*) are also part of spiritual practices for sustenance of healthy and hearty life. Meditation is a higher-level yoga that not only calms and rejuvenates the mind, but also gradually awakens and prepares it for spiritual progress.

Spirituality, because of its reach into the deeper depths of emotions, has intense impact on one's aspirations and thought process. Spiritual attitude trains us to live harmoniously with our environment and to meet the challenges of life, at personal, familial, professional and social levels. It thus elevates clarity and focus of mind and sharpens its incisive intellectual potentials. Yoga, in its totality, is a practical science of spiritual progress. Through higher-level yogic endeavors, all selfish desires, ambitions, attachments, greed, envy, anger, negative instincts, etc. loosen their grip and are gradually uprooted completely. This unfolds the beginning of absolute well-being.

The *Shastras* warn that only having skills, talents and industriousness may provide sharp rise in riches, but the gains won't last long if one adopts immoral means, as these will always load one with risks, threats and legal problems and dangerous 'partners' in the murky deals. One of the hymn of *Atharva-veda* (3/24/5) implies charity for philanthropic projects: It says "Earn by hundred hands and donate by thousands." It is pathetic to see that hardly anyone cares for such teachings anymore. Corruption seems to have crossed all limits today in people's race for grabbing more and more power



and status by snatching hoards of money and property. Man has lost his identity in the illusion of false status and showoff. Life seems to be thriving on artificiality. The cracked foundations of life and its values, coupled with the delusive charm of luxuries and glamour have silenced the inner inspirations that strengthen the mind and nurture wisdom.

By and large, people have become so used to comforts that restraining these appears hard to them. Bearing hardships for the sake of morality sounds like a madman's craze today. This is a major cause of weakening of mind that has induced a sense of 'insecurity' among most people. Driven by this sense, one tends to accumulate 'enough' money as a 'precautionary measure' to feel 'secured'.

Instead of seeing lack of wisdom in extravagant social functions, and customs of pompous arrangements and squandering money in birthday bashes, wedding ceremonies etc. one feels obliged to save money for similar things back home. Is this a sign of maturity? Riches have become the yardstick of honor in our social system. The wealthier you are, the more respectable you are supposed to be in today's world! Because of superficial outlook, many people only see the riches one has without bothering about from where and how this money was earned. Even if people know of something wrong in its means, they do not care. Not only that, many consider this as better option to make money – why labor so hard and take pains if a shortcut (of corrupt practices, fraud and cheating others) is available? What kind of social trends are these? If this is what we are feeding to the children, money would naturally become their prime goal. Why should we then expect them to have any values? What foresight we, the 'intelligent beings' have for their future?

Those who want to improve scenario at least at the personal and familial levels, must see that spiritual attitude alone can liberate us from the false pulls and notions. "Focusing on what is already there in your life and not on what you don't have" may sound like age-old preaching of positive thinking, but it remains an important and effective principle even today. Dr. Deepak Chopra's remark fabulously endorse it – "There is power in knowledge, desire and spirit. This power is the source to create prosperity" (Chopra 1998).

Adoption of spirituality in thoughts strengthens emotional fitness and encourages disciplined lifestyle that ensures physical and mental wellbeing. It also motivates industriousness, dedicated efforts for refinement of talent, honest earning and prudent spending, and thus endows one with what is required to have lasting prosperity.

Individual effort for righteous self-development is known as *Sadhana*. Positivity in thoughts, moralistic attitude, nurturing worthy qualities and their application in conduct are the constituents of *Sadhana* (Sharma 2011).

## CONCLUSIONS

The present day rising trends of failure of social structures, conflicts in families, feelings of insecurity in youth, etc. have made people to think of the forgotten aspect of spirituality in their personal and professional lives. People have started realizing that this important link of life has been left untouched while pursuing their materialistic gains in the ever growing present day urbanized civilization. Outer and inner purity, follow of good moral conduct, strong character of righteousness, enlightenment in thoughts, are the basics of applied spirituality. The science of spirituality incorporates the inter-personal relationships in families and organizations and is the righteous growth and expansion of the 'self'. The paper shows how the wisdom of Vedanta is an excellent guide to ensure successful inter-personal relationships and to generate a harmonious environment in workplace and society.

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